THE WORLD.

NUMBER CXIII.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *February* the 27th, 1755.

THE cuſtom of DUELLING is moſt evidently *the reſult of the paſſions of the many, and of the deſigns of a few*; but here the definition ſtops; ſince far from being *the ape of reaſon*, it prevails in open defiance of it. It is the manifeſt offspring of barbarity and folly, a monſtrous birth, and diſtinguiſhed by the moſt ſhocking and ridiculous marks of both it's parents.

I WOULD not willingly give offence to the politer part of my readers, whom I acknowledge to be my beſt cuſtomers, and therefore I will not ſo much as hint at the impiety of this practice; nor will I labour to ſhow how repugnant it is to inſtinct, reaſon, and every moral and ſocial obligation, even to the faſhionable *fitneſs of things*. Viewed on the criminal ſide, it excites horror; on the abſurd ſide, it is an inexhauſtible fund of ridicule. The Guilt has been conſidered and expoſed by

abler

abler pens than mine, and indeed ought to be cenſured with more dignity, than a fugitive weekly paper can pretend to: I ſhall therefore content myſelf with ridiculing the Folly of it.

THE ancients muſt certainly have had very imperfect notions of HONOUR, for they had none of DUELLING. One reads, it is true, of murders committed every now and then among the Greeks and the Romans, prompted only by intereſt or revenge, and performed without the leaſt Attic politeneſs, or Roman urbanity. No letters of gentle invitation were ſent to any man to come and have his throat cut the next morning; and we may obſerve that Milo had not the common decency to give Clodius, the moſt profligate of men, the moſt dangerous of citizens, and his own inveterate enemy, an equal chance of deſtroying him.

THIS delicacy of ſentiment, this refinement of manners, was reſerved for the politer Goths, Viſigoths, Oſtrogoths, Vandals, &c. to introduce, cultivate and eſtabliſh. I muſt confeſs that they have generally been conſidered as barbarous nations; and to be ſure there are ſome circumſtances which ſeem to favour that opinion. They made open war upon learning, and gave no quarter even to the monuments of arts and ſciences. But then it muſt be owned, on the other hand, that upon thoſe ruins, they eſtabliſhed the honourable and noble ſcience of HOMICIDE, dignified, exalted and aſcertained TRUE HONOUR, worſhipped it as their deity, and ſacrificed to it hecatombs of human victims.

IN thoſe happy days, HONOUR, that is, ſingle combat, was the great and unerring teſt of civil rights, moral actions and ſound doctrines. It was ſanctified by the church; and the churchmen were occaſionally allowed the honour and pleaſure of it; for we read of many inſtances of DUELS between Men and Prieſts. Nay, it was without

without appeal, the infallible teſt of female chaſtity. If a princeſs, or any lady of diſtinction, was ſuſpected of a little incontinency, ſome brave champion who was commonly privy to, or perhaps the author of it, ſtood forth in her defence, and aſſerted her innocence with the point of his ſword or lance. If by his activity, ſkill, ſtrength and courage, he murdered the accuſer, the lady was ſpotleſs; but if her champion fell, her guilt was manifeſt. This heroic gallantry in defence of the fair, I preſume, occaſioned that aſſociation of ideas (otherwiſe ſeemingly unrelative to each other) of the BRAVE and the FAIR: for indeed *in thoſe days* it behoved a lady, who had the leaſt regard for her reputation, to chuſe a lover of uncommon activity, ſtrength and courage. This notion, as I am well aſſured, ſtill prevails in many reputable families about Covent-Garden, where the BRAVE in the kitchen, are always within call of the FAIR in the firſt or ſecond floor.

BY this ſummary method of proceeding, the quibbles, the delays and the expence of the law were avoided, and the troubleſome ſhackles of the goſpel knocked off; HONOUR ruling in their ſtead. To prove the utility and juſtice of this method, I cannot help mentioning a very extraordinary DUEL between a man of diſtinction and a dog, in the year 1371 in preſence of king Charles the fifth of France. Both the relation and the print of this DUEL are to be found in father Montfaucon.

A GENTLEMAN of the court was ſuppoſed to have murdered another, who had been miſſing for ſome days. This ſuſpicion aroſe from the mute teſtimony of the abſent perſon's dog, a large Iriſh greyhound, who with uncommon rage, attacked this ſuppoſed murderer wherever he met him. As he was a gentleman, and a man of very nice honour (though by the way he really had murdered the man) he could not bear lying

under

under ſo diſhonourable a ſuſpicion, and therefore applied to the king for leave to juſtify his innocence by ſingle combat with the ſaid dog. The king, being a great lover of juſtice, granted his ſuit, ordered the liſts to be made ready, appointed the time and named the weapons. The gentleman was to have an offenſive club in his hand, the dog a defenſive tub to reſort to occaſionally. The Iriſh greyhound willingly met this fair inviter at the time and place appointed; for it has always been obſervable of that particular breed, that they have an uncommon alacrity at ſingle combat. They fought; the dog prevailed, and almoſt killed the honourable gentleman, who had then the honour to confeſs his guilt, and of being hanged for it in a very few days.

When letters, arts and ſciences revived in Europe, the ſcience of Homicide was farther cultivated and improved. If on the one hand it loſt a little of the extent of it's juriſdiction, on the other, it acquired great preciſion, clearneſs and beauty, by the care and pains of the very beſt Italian and Spaniſh authors, who reduced it into a regular body, and enlightened the world with their admirable codes, digeſts, pandects and reports, *della cavalleresca*, in ſome hundreds of volumes. Almoſt all poſſible caſes of honour were conſidered and ſtated; two and thirty different ſorts of lies were diſtinguiſhed; and the adequate ſatisfaction neceſſary for each, was with great ſolidity and preciſion aſcertained. A kick with a thin ſhoe was declared more injurious to honour, (though not ſo painful to the part kicked) than a kick with a thick ſhoe; and in ſhort, a thouſand other diſcoveries of the like nature, equally beneficial to ſociety, were communicated to the world in thoſe voluminous treaſures of

In the preſent degenerate age, thoſe fundamental laws of HONOUR are exploded and ridiculed; and ſingle combat thought a very uncertain, and even unjuſt deciſion of civil property, female chaſtity and criminal accuſations: but I would humbly aſk why? Is not ſingle combat as juſt a deciſion of any other thing whatſoever, as it is of veracity, the caſe to which it is now in a manner confined? I am of opinion that there are more men who will lie and fight too, than there are who will lie and not fight; becauſe I believe there are more men in the world who have, than who want courage. But if fighting is the teſt of veracity, my readers of condition will I hope pardon me when I ſay, that my future inquiries and reſearches after truth, ſhall be altogether confined to the three regiments of guards.

There is one reaſon indeed which makes me ſuſpect that a DUEL may not always be the infallible criterion of veracity, and that is, that the combatants very rarely meet upon equal terms. I beg leave to ſtate a caſe, which may very probably, and not even unfrequently happen, and which yet is not provided for, nor even mentioned in the INSTITUTES OF HONOUR.

A VERY lean, ſlender, active young fellow of great HONOUR, weighing perhaps not quite twelve ſtone, and who has from his youth taken leſſons of HOMICIDE from a murder-maſter, has, or thinks he has, a point of honour to diſcuſs with an unwieldy, fat, middle-aged gentleman, of nice HONOUR likewiſe, weighing four and twenty ſtone, and who in his youth may not poſſibly have had the ſame commendable application to the noble ſcience of HOMICIDE, The lean gentleman ſends a very civil letter to the fat one, inviting him to come and be killed by him the next morning in Hyde-park. Should the fat gentleman accept this invitation, and waddle to the place appointed, he goes to inevitable ſlaughter. Now upon this ſtate of the caſe, might not the fat gentleman, conſiſtent with the rules of HONOUR,